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ACTION SCT-00 B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B4

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CA-01
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIP-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DEAE-00
	DINT-00	DOTE-00	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	OIGO-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	FBO-00	FCC-01	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	JUSE-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	M-00	AC-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7077  
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JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 001807

STATE FOR WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/12  
TAGS: PGOV, PTER, ASEC, PHUM, MOPS, PREF, SNAR, CO  
SUBJECT: FARC ATTACKS ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION  
INFRASTRUCTURE

REF: BOGOTA 00758

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
DATE/CASE ID: 02 JUL 2004 200303455

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON FOR REASONS  
1.5 (B) AND (D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (SBU) SINCE THE END OF THE DESPEJE ON FEBRUARY 21, THE FARC HAVE UNLEASHED A SERIES OF DEBILITATING ATTACKS ON ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE, LEAVING LARGE PARTS OF SOUTHERN COLOMBIA WITHOUT ELECTRICITY, GAS, AND TELEPHONE SERVICE. THE FARC HAVE ALSO SET UP ROADBLOCKS AND DESTROYED KEY LAND ARTERIES IN AND AROUND THE EX-DESPEJE. RUMORS, WHICH APPEAR FALSE, OF THE FARC PLACING CONTAMINATES IN THE WATER SYSTEMS OF VARIOUS SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES FORCED THOUSANDS TO AVOID USING WATER FOR SEVERAL DAYS. END SUMMARY.

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ENERGY: BLACKOUTS & PIPELINE ATTACKS

2. (U) ON FEBRUARY 24, THE FARC DYNAMITED AN ELECTRICITY SUBSTATION IN PATIA AND NUMEROUS PYLONS IN EL ESTANQUILLO (SOUTHERN CAUCA DEPARTMENT), CUTTING OFF POWER TO 15 TOWNS IN CAUCA DEPARTMENT, SECTIONS OF NARINO DEPARTMENT, AND SMALL PARTS OF NORTHERN ECUADOR WHICH RECEIVE ELECTRICITY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. ON FEBRUARY 21, THE FARC ATTACKED AN ELECTRICAL SUBSTATION IN ALTAMIRA (HUILA DEPARTMENT WHICH BORDERS THE EX-DESPEJE), SEVERING ELECTRICITY TO 20 MUNICIPALITIES IN HUILA AND THE ENTIRE DEPARTMENT OF CAQUETA, WHOSE NORTHERN MUNICIPALITY OF SAN VICENTE DEL CAGUAN FORMED PART OF THE EX-DESPEJE. ON THE SAME DAY, THE FARC DESTROYED AN ELECTRICAL TOWER IN TIMBA (CAUCA DEPARTMENT), CAUSING SPORADIC POWER OUTAGES IN THE LOCAL REGION.  
[NOTE: IN THE PAST 3 YEARS, ATTACKS ON COLOMBIA'S ELECTRICAL GRID BY EITHER THE FARC OR ELN HAVE FELLED OVER 1,000 TOWERS AND CAUSED THE PRIMARY OWNER, "INTERCONEXION ELECTRICA S.A.," TO LOSE ROUGHLY USD 25 MILLION, AS REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS. END NOTE.]

3. (U) ON FEBRUARY 21, THE FARC DYNAMITED THE SEBASTOPOL-MEDELLIN GAS PIPELINE NEAR BARBOSA (ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT), RESULTING IN THE SUSPENSION OF GAS TO 566 INDUSTRIES BY MEDELLIN PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANY. THE

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NATIONAL DAILY "EL TIEMPO" REPORTED THAT "TRANSMETANO" GAS COMPANY GENERAL MANAGER RAFAEL YEPES SAID THE PIPELINE HAD BEEN ATTACKED TWICE ON FEBRUARY 20. GAS SERVICE WAS REPORTEDLY RESTORED ON FEBRUARY 23.

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	DINT-00	DOTE-00	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	OIGO-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	FBO-00	FCC-01	VC-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	JUSE-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	M-00	AC-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03
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	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BOGOTA 001807

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INFRASTRUCTURE

[Redacted] B1, B4

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TELECOMMUNICATION: PHONE SERVICE DOWN  
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6. (U) ON FEBRUARY 23, THE FARC DESTROYED A REPEATING  
STATION BELONGING TO THE STATE-OWNED NATIONAL  
TELECOMMUNICATION ENTERPRISE ("TELECOM") IN MONTANITAS  
(CAQUETA DEPARTMENT), LEAVING THE DEPARTMENT WITHOUT  
LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE SERVICE. ON FEBRUARY 22, THE  
FARC BOMBED A TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER NEAR FUSAGASUGA IN  
CUNDINAMARCA DEPARTMENT (APPROXIMATELY 50 KILOMETERS  
SOUTH OF BOGOTA), LEAVING SIX TOWNS IN TOLIMA DEPARTMENT  
AND 13 IN CUNDINAMARCA DEPARTMENT WITHOUT LOCAL AND LONG-

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DISTANCE TELEPHONE SERVICE. SEVERAL TOWNS IN NORTHERN BOYACA DEPARTMENT ARE ALSO REPORTEDLY WITHOUT TELEPHONE SERVICE DUE TO FARC ATTACKS ON TOWERS IN THAT DEPARTMENT.

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ROADS: NO SAFE PASSAGE  
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7. (U) THE FARC HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO BLOCK THE MAJOR LAND ARTERIES IN AND OUT OF THE DESPEJE. SINCE FEBRUARY 21, THE FARC HAVE SET UP CHECKPOINTS AND ROADBLOCKS, AND PLACED MINES, ALONG THE FLORENCIA-SAN VICENTE DEL CAGUAN HIGHWAY, THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE BETWEEN CAQUETA AND META DEPARTMENTS. [NOTE: THE FLORENCIA-SAN VICENTE DEL CAGUAN HIGHWAY IS WHERE INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE INGRID BETANCOURT WAS KIDNAPPED ON FEBRUARY 23 -- SEE SEPTEL. END NOTE.] ALSO ON FEBRUARY 21, THE FARC DESTROYED A BRIDGE LINKING FLORENCIA AND NEIVA (CAPITAL OF HUILA DEPARTMENT) AND A BRIDGE BETWEEN TIBU AND LA GABARRA (NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENT).

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WATER: FALSE RUMORS CAUSE STOPPAGES  
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8. (U) ON FEBRUARY 22, LOCAL OFFICIALS REPORTED THAT THE FARC HAD PLACED AN UNIDENTIFIED TOXIN IN THE WATER SYSTEM OF PITALITO (HUILA DEPARTMENT) AND DIESEL FUEL IN PASTO'S WATER SYSTEM (CAPITAL OF NARINO DEPARTMENT). LOCAL RESIDENTS IN PITALITO (APPROXIMATELY 100,000) AND PASTO (APPROXIMATELY 250,000), WERE ADVISED NOT TO USE THE WATER AND LOCAL HOSPITALS WERE PLACED ON MAXIMUM ALERT. ON FEBRUARY 24, PASTO RESUMED SERVICE AFTER DETERMINING THAT THE FUEL, WHICH WAS REMOVED FROM THE WATER SYSTEM, HAD NOT CONTAMINATED THE WATER SUPPLY. ON FEBRUARY 25,

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THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSTITUTE ISSUED A STATEMENT THAT PITALITO'S WATER SUPPLY HAD NOT BEEN CONTAMINATED AND WAS SAFE TO USE. NO LOCAL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES REPORTED CASES OF WATER-RELATED ILLNESS. [NOTE: THESE ALLEGATIONS OF WATER TAMPERING COME ON THE HEELS OF THE FARC'S ATTACK ON THE GOLILLAS DAM ON JANUARY 20, WHICH, IF IT HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL, WOULD HAVE CRIPPLED BOGOTA'S WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM (REFTEL). END NOTE.]

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COMMENT  
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9. (C) ALTHOUGH THE FULL IMPACT OF THE ATTACKS IS NOT YET KNOWN, LOCAL COMMUNITIES HAVE ENDURED CONSIDERABLE HARDSHIPS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS AT THE HANDS OF THE FARC. NORMAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS BATHING, COOKING, AND USING THE TELEPHONE, HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED. IN ADDITION, LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE LIKELY SUFFERING FROM THE INABILITY TO TRANSPORT GOODS, RECEIVE EXPECTED SUPPLIES, AND MAINTAIN INVENTORIES, ESPECIALLY REFRIGERATED PRODUCTS.

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AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
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